

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 0798

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS KS US UR
SUBJ: USSR ATTITUDE TOWARD CONTINUED ROK FISHING IN KAMCHATKA
WATERS

REFS: (1) 76 STATE 18226 (NOTAL), (2) SEOUL 0745, (3) SEOUL 0317,
(4) SEOUL 0303

1. PARA 2 FIRST REFTTEL IS INCORRECT IN SUGGESTING THAT THE
MAJOR PORTION OF ROK CATCH IN KAMCHATKA IS EXPORTED TO JAPAN.
IN FACT ALL ALASKA POLLACK FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE NORTH PACI-
FIC (400,000 M/T IN 1975 AND 76) IS LANDED IN KOREA FOR DOMESTIC
CONSUMPTION AND PROCESSING. KAMCHATKAN ALASKAN POLLACK CATCH
WAS 337,000 M/T IN 1975 AND 279,000 M/T IN 1976, PLUS 143,000
M/T FROM US SIDE. IN 1976, ABOUT ONE HALF OF THE CATCH WAS
FILLETED AND FROZEN INTO ABOUT 40,000 M/T OF FISH BLOCKS FOR
THE US FROZEN (MRS. PAUL'S KITCHENS) AND FAST FOOD (MCDONALD'S,
ARTHUR TREACHER'S FISH N CHIPS, ETC.) INDUSTRIES. WASTE BY-
PRODUCT WAS IMPORTANT SOURCE OF FISH MEAL FOR KOREA PURINA,
A US JOINT VENTURE ANIMAL FEED PRODUCER. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS
THAT NO OTHER SOURCE EXISTS FOR THE KOREAN FISHBLOCKS IMPORTED
INTO THE US AND THAT US FISHING INDUSTRY IS UNABLE AND UN-
LIKELY TO ENTER POLLACK FISHERY OVER NEXT SEVERAL YEARS.
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2. KOREAN OFFICIALS AND INDUSTRY FIGURES EMPHASIZE THAT THE ONE-
HALF OF THE CATCH CONSUMED DOMESTICALLY TAKES PRIORITY OVER
EXPORTS BECAUSE IT IS A TRADITIONAL POPULAR LOW COST ANIMAL
PROTEIN FOOD FOR THE LOW INCOME SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION.
SHOULD, FOR EXAMPLE, THE ALASKAN POLLACK CATCH BE CUT BACK
BECAUSE OF LOSS OF THE KAMCHATKA FISHING GROUNDS AND LOW QUOTA

ALLOWANCE BY THE US, THEY WOULD FORESEE NO REPEAT NO EXPORT
IN 1977.

3. KOREAN ANXIETY OVER SOVIET INTENTIONS HAS CONTINUED TO
BUILD SINCE ORIGINAL ROKG REQUEST FOR US GOOD OFFICES AND
ASSISTANCE (1976 SEOUL 9925).

4. HUH SOLICITED EMBOFFS VIEWS ON (A) WHETHER SOVS INTEND
TO WAIT UNTIL CONCLUSION OF LOS PLENARY IN MAY AT NEW YORK
TO ESTABLISH 200-MILE ZONE, (B) WHETHER SOME TRADE INCENTIVE
COULD BE OFFERED THE SOVS IN RETURN FOR CONTINUED ACCESS FOR
FISHING, (C) WHETHER SOVS WOULD CONSIDER ROK (OR ROC) AS ONE
OF THE "INTERESTED COUNTRIES" WITH WHICH THEY SAY THEY WILL
HOLD DISCUSSIONS, AND (D) WHAT MEANING COULD BE ATTRIBUTED
TO SOV STATEMENTS THAT ITS DECREE "...DID NOT AFFECT LEGITIMATE
FISHING OPERATIONS OF THE USSR AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES." HE OB-
SERVED THAT THE ROK RECORD OF FISHING IS SECOND ONLY TO JAPAN
IN THAT AREA ALTHOUGH NUMBERS OF NK VESSELS THERE. EMBOFF SIMPLY
NOTED THAT TALKS WERE GOING ON WITH SOME COUNTRIES SUCH AS JAPAN
AND THAT THE MEAGER INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO USG HAD SUGGESTED
POSSIBILITY THAT SOVS MIGHT WAIT UNTIL AFTER LOS SESSION
BEFORE ESTABLISHING ZONE AND THAT WE WERE ATTEMPTING TO CLARIFY
THAT AND OTHER POINTS.

5. SOVIET DECISION, IN HUH'S OPINION, WOULD BE AFFECTED
BY THE ANNUAL USSR-JAPAN FISHERY MEETINGS IN MARCH WHERE SOV
ZONE WOULD BE THE MOST IMPORTANT TOPIC, AND BY A RECENT
EC REQUEST THAT "...SOME COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE USSR,"
SHOULD MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO CONTINUE TO FISH IN EC WATERS.
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HE SPECULATED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD NECESSARILY BE THINKING
ABOUT TIMING IF THEY HAD NOT ALREADY DECIDED TO WAIT UNTIL
MAY OR JUNE.
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